Rhus trilobata / Pseudoroegneria spicata Shrub Herbaceous Vegetation

COMMON NAME	Skunkbush Sumac / Bluebunch Wheatgrass Shrub Herbaceous Vegetation
SYNONYM	Skunkbush Sumac / Bluebunch Wheatgrass Shrub Prairie
PHYSIOGNOMIC CLASS	Herbaceous vegetation (V)
PHYSIOGNOMIC SUBCLASS	Perennial graminoid vegetation (V.A)
PHYSIOGNOMIC GROUP	Temperate or subpolar grassland with a sparse shrub layer (V.A.7)
PHYSIOGNOMIC SUBGROUP	Natural/semi-natural (V.A.7.N)
FORMATION	Medium-tall temperate or subpolar grassland with a sparse cold-deciduous shrub layer (V.A.7.N.g.)
ALLIANCE	*Rhus trilobata* Shrub Herbaceous Alliance

CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENCE LEVEL 2

USFWS WETLAND SYSTEM Upland

RANGE
Globally
This community is found in Montana and Wyoming.

Devils Tower National Monument
This community is found on the summit of Devils Tower.

ENVIRONMENTAL DESCRIPTION
Globally
This community is typically found on dry mid to upper slopes and ridge tops. It has been identified on butte tops in eastern Wyoming (Thilenius et al. 1995). Slope and aspect are variable but soils are consistently shallow and rocky. They often form from sandstone parent materials and rock fragments, outcrops, and bare soil cover much of the ground (Mueggler and Stewart 1978).

Devils Tower National Monument
This community occurs on the summit of Devils Tower, a gently sloping very rocky site underlain by phonolite porphyry. Soil development is poor.

MOST ABUNDANT SPECIES
Globally

Strata	Species
Short shrub	*Rhus trilobata*
Herbaceous	*Bromus tectorum, Pascopyrum smithii, Pseudoroegneria spicata*

Devils Tower National Monument

Strata	Species
Short shrub	*Rhus trilobata, Artemisia frigida*
Herbaceous	*Pseudoroegneria spicata, Koeleria macrantha*

DIAGNOSTIC SPECIES
Globally
Rhus trilobata, Pseudoroegneria spicata, Koeleria macrantha

Devils Tower National Monument
Artemisia tridentata, Pseudoroegneria spicata, Rhus trilobata

VEGETATION DESCRIPTION
Globally
Herbaceous species dominate the vegetation, with short shrubs and non-vascular plants present but of lesser importance. Total vegetation cover is moderate (Brown 1971, Thilenius et al. 1995) and few plants grow taller than 1 meter. *Pseudoroegneria spicata* is the most abundant herbaceous species. Others commonly found include *Koeleria macrantha, Schizachyrium scoparium, Bouteloua curtipendula, Bromus tectorum*, and *Opuntia*

polyacantha. Shrubs generally have from 10-25% cover. *Rhus trilobata* is the most common. It is often found with *Artemisia frigida, A. tridentata, Prunus virginiana, Ribes cereum,* or *Eriogonum* spp.

Devils Tower National Monument
A single stand of this vegetation type was observed. Both the short shrub and herbaceous strata were estimated at 5 to 25% cover. Non-vascular cover (lichens and mosses) is significant. *Rhus trilobata* and *Artemisia frigida* are the dominant short shrub species. A. tridentata also occurs on the summit of Devils Tower but is not common.

OTHER NOTEWORTHY SPECIES Information not available.

CONSERVATION RANK G4

RANK JUSTIFICATION

DATABASE CODE CEGL001120

COMMENTS
Devils Tower National Monument
The single stand sampled in this study is also similar to *Artemisia tridentata / Pseudoroegneria spicata* Shrub Herbaceous Vegetation in terms of species composition, but *A. tridentata* is not abundant. Thus, it is currently placed in *Rhus trilobata / Pseudoroegneria spicata* Shrub Herbaceous Vegetation.

REFERENCES
Brown, R. W. 1971. Distribution of plant communities in southeastern Montana Badlands. American Midland Naturalist 85(2):458-477.

Mueggler, W. F. and W. L. Stewart. 1978. Grassland and shrubland habitat types of western Montana. General Technical Report INT-66. Intermountain Forest and Range Experiment Station, USDA Forest Service, Ogden, Utah. 154 pp.

Thilenius, J. F., G. R.. Brown, and A. L. Medina. 1995. Vegetation on semi-arid rangelands, Cheyenne River Basin, Wyoming. General Technical Report RM-GTR-263. Rocky Mountain Forest and Range Experiment Station, USDA Forest Service, Fort Collins, Colorado. 60 pp.